Northwest Territories

TAKE ONE

Northwest Territories Film Strategy and Action Plan

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

The Northwest Territories (NWT) is home to a vibrant screen-based media production industry built upon the dedicated efforts of both local and guest producers committed to telling our stories to the world.

The product of their work and passion does more than generate employment and spending for actors, technical staff and suppliers of goods and services, it also helps to showcase our incredible landscapes, cultures, traditions and iconic landmarks to the world.

The development of *Take One: Northwest Territories Film Strategy and Action Plan*, supports the Government of the Northwest Territories' commitment to advance a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices.

We are grateful to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the NWT Professional Media Association, NWT Tourism and Western Arctic Moving Pictures for their ongoing assistance; and the individuals, businesses, associations, governments, film commissions, production companies, guest producers and industry stakeholders who provided valuable input and perspectives during the consultation phase.

We also want to recognize the partnership and funding support of the Government of Canada's Northern Economic Development Agency in the development of this document.

We look forward to advancing the implementation of this strategy and action plan in a manner that supports the integrity of the Northwest Territories unique film and media arts industry and creates the environment needed for it to flourish locally and participate globally.

The Honourable David Ramsay
Minister, Industry, Tourism and Investment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Take One: Northwest Territories Film Strategy and Action Plan aims to guide the planning and implementation of policies, investments and actions required to realize the economic potential that exists within the Northwest Territories (NWT) Film and Media Arts sectors.

Its vision, goals and objectives were informed by stakeholder consultations completed in online surveys, stakeholder interviews and a focus group conducted by the NWT Professional Media Association. Through them, the following opportunities and challenges were revealed:

- Production activity provides significant return to the NWT through economic, social and other industrial impacts;
- Barriers to growth include limited infrastructure, training opportunities and financing, particularly for mid-size to large productions;
- Gaps in funding and limited capacity for support services (especially in terms of rebates or incentives) challenge the competitiveness of the NWT for consideration by both guest and local producers;
- Opportunities for growth exist, but investment is needed in strengthening the NWT funding environment, local production companies and supporting infrastructure.

Today's NWT film and television industry is comprised of an estimated 106 individuals and 24 businesses that contribute almost $9.7 million to the NWT's Gross Domestic Product. Potential exists for even further economic growth and to achieve recognition for local productions, as well as to be recognized as a destination for guest productions.

The NWT Film Strategy focuses on five key strategic objectives:

1) Strengthen government/industry roles and partnerships;
2) Enhance funding and financial support;
3) Create training opportunities;
4) Assist in building infrastructure, below-the-line crews and support services; and
5) Develop efficient and effective marketing and communications.

A series of actions are provided for each of the five objectives. The timely completion and implementation of these recommendations will allow the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) to achieve its strategic vision in partnership with stakeholders over the next five years.

With the wealth of talent and opportunity in the NWT and considering the many economic, social and cultural impacts, there is a clear rationale to invest in the growth of Screen-based Media Production in the NWT.

Renellta Arluk is filmed by cameraman Pablo Salzevitja for her episode of Dene A Journey, Season 1. Photo credit: Dene A Journey Productions.

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT MANDATE

In 2013, the release of the NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy identified the NWT Film Sector as a key to strengthening the economic viability of the Arts sector and increasing opportunities for investment in the NWT. It highlighted the need for a definitive NWT film strategy to guide government investment, support business opportunities and stimulate economic growth.

"Increased activity in the film industry," it noted "will generate benefits in other sectors of the economy. Exposing the NWT, its residents, adventures and stories, through film and television will increase interest from those looking to visit and possibly move to the NWT."

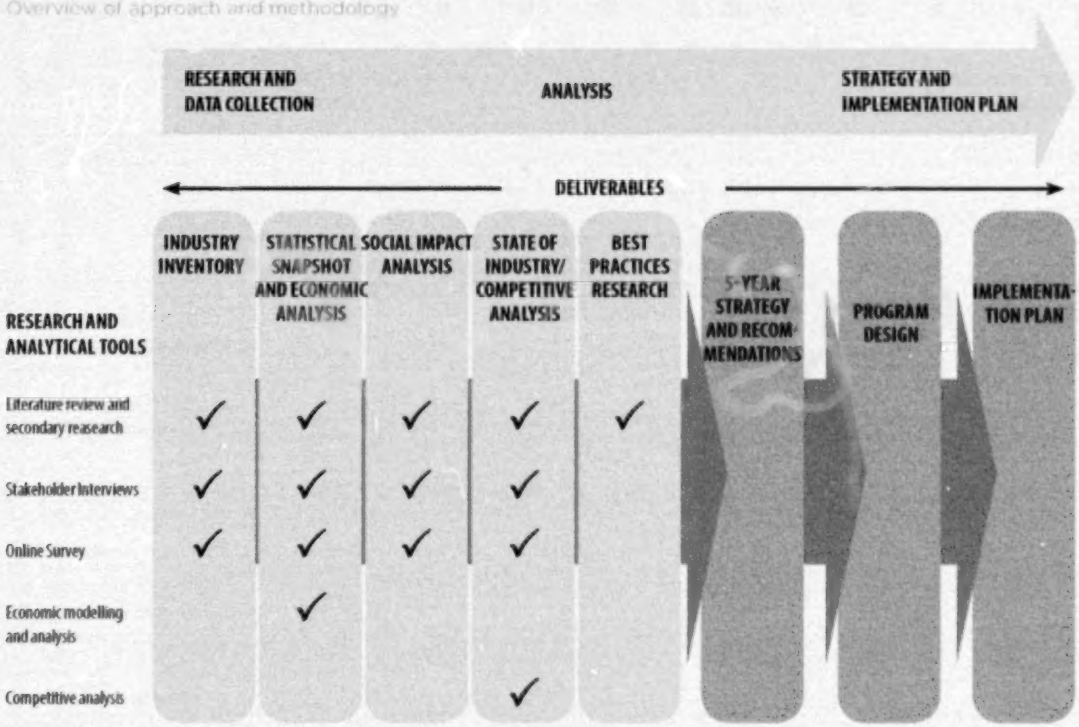
The development of, *Take One: Northwest Territories Film Strategy and Action Plan* (NWT Film Strategy), represents a significant response to the recommendations that were provided.

Under the guidance of the NWT's Associate Film Commissioner and with support from the GNWT's Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) and the Government of Canada's Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor), subject matter expertise was commissioned from Nordicity Group Ltd. (Nordicity) to advance a foundational document to guide the GNWT's development of this strategy and action plan to grow and sustain the film and media arts industry in the NWT.

Nordicity's mandate was twofold: to prepare an impact analysis of the NWT's film and media arts industry addressing both economic and social impacts; and to provide recommended actions for how the GNWT can advance its work in support of the industry over the next five years. Their report was prepared with the expertise of their Yellowknife-based partners, Kakfwi & Associates.

Their research and analytical tools included: a literature review, competitive analysis, economic modeling and various forms of stakeholder consultations. Interviews were conducted with 20 stakeholders and a focus group organized by the NWT Professional Media Association (NWTPMA).

Overview of approach and methodology



The NWT Film Strategy is also based on the following pillars, which serve to guide the development of the industry generally and which flow into the themes of its recommendations:

- Funding and financial support;
- Infrastructure (human, equipment and facilities);
- Government-industry partnerships; and
- Efficient marketing.

HOW WE GOT TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY:

2014
Film Sector Analysis and Action Plan conducted

OCT 2013
NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy released, which includes three recommendations in support of the film industry

SEP 2012
The first ever **NWT Filmmaker and Producer Forum** is held during the Yellowknife International Film Festival, with support from ITI through the NWT Film Commission and ECE

JUL 2012
Website launch of **nwtfilm.com,** which hosts information on locations, permitting and regional contacts

MAR 2012
New **mandate for NWT Film Commission** developed in consultation with industry

NOV 2011
Formation of the **NWT Professional Media Association**

JUN 2011
Film Commission undergoes restructuring with a dedicated **full time Associate Film Commissioner**

MAR 2011
ITI and ECE co-host meeting with NWT Film Industry to review report findings

ITI announces **dedicated SEED funding** which contributes $100,000 to the film sector, in addition to other funding programs

FEB 2011
The report, **A Review of Film Commission Mandates**, is released

MAY 2010
The NWT Film Industry **highlights need for increased support** and ITI responds with an industry review

STATE OF THE NWT FILM INDUSTRY

To determine an optimal approach and business model to grow and sustain the film and media arts industry in the NWT, it is important to first understand its current state and the environment in which it operates.

VALUE

One of the most direct measurements of media production in a jurisdiction is production volume, or the cumulative sum of the production expenditures based on the location of spending (i.e., the total budgets of productions filmed in a given period within the NWT).

The total production volume within the NWT in 2013 was $9.35 million, of which $5.9 million is attributed to independent production by both NWT-based and guest production companies; $1.95 million is attributed to individual producers; and $1.5 million is attributed to in-house broadcast production (e.g., news programming created by local broadcasters).

Overall, the NWT film and television industry contributes almost $9.7 million in territorial GDP and the equivalent of 106 full time jobs.

It is estimated that NWT-based companies and guest producers participated in a combined 69 projects across the NWT in 2013. Of these projects, 93% were Canadian productions, and the rest were service work for foreign productions.

COMPOSITION

NWT-based production companies and individuals are heavily concentrated in factual and unscripted television or documentary films.

Flexible partnerships have defined the NWT film industry for the last 25 years, as producers and filmmakers have collaborated on a project-by-project basis. Today, there are estimated to be 24 film businesses operating in the NWT.

Most NWT film producers operate as sole proprietorships and face the same challenges as small or micro-businesses; writing their own proposals, self-marketing and handling administrative tasks in addition to their creative and technical activities.

"There is already a budding, committed film community in Yellowknife and the NWT has a real opportunity. Those who can see 'over the horizon' will see Yellowknife become the film centre of the North.

- Guest producer

Similarly, professional filmmakers living and working in the North are often multi-skilled in documentary production and able to fill a variety of production roles.

Today's NWT film sector can be subdivided into the following five segments:

NWT-based production (or local production): This segment includes the production of films, television programs and digital media content by persons or independently-owned businesses based in the NWT. In these projects, the NWT producer controls the copyright of the product.

Co-production: This segment includes projects in which a NWT producer shares the copyright with a non-NWT producer – either foreign or Canadian (including co-ventures with the US).

Guest production: This category includes projects that were shot in part or in full within the NWT, but developed by producers resident in other parts of Canada or outside of Canada, and who fully control the copyright for the production.

Broadcaster in-house production: These projects include productions by NWT-based broadcasters, which are typically news, sports, current events, public affairs programming, talk shows, etc.

Other NWT film and video production: This segment includes commercial government contracts or other productions that are not typically eligible for existing forms of funding. Many self-proclaimed members of the NWT film industry supplement their primary employment with this type of work.

PUBLIC SUPPORT

Direct public support for businesses and non-profit organizations engaged in the NWT film sector comes from:

- The Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development (SEED) Policy delivered by ITI; and the
- NWT Arts Council and other programs delivered under the Culture and Heritage banner of the GNWT's Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE).

As part of the consultative process for this Strategy in 2013 and 2014, ITI introduced finding under its SEED Policy for Small Productions and Trailer/Pitch production, as well as Pitch Marketing and Product Marketing.

Existing ITI and ECE programs do not provide sufficient funding to enable medium-to-large commercial productions (i.e. budgets over $50,000) and there exists a gap in funding sources for mid-career and established professionals resident in the NWT.

The office of the NWT Film Commission provides indirect support to the sector by promoting the NWT as a filming destination, providing information and support to productions filming on location and serving as a liaison between all industry stakeholders. The Film Commission uses its NWT Film Suppliers Guide as the primary tool to promote resident individuals, businesses and organizations who provide products, services and specific areas of expertise to the film industry.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The film and television industry is recognized as an important driver of both economic activity and cultural development.

The film sector can lead development of the creative sector as a whole, especially when inputs such as local music are used in soundtracks or works by local artisans are showcased within a film.

Film tourism is a growing phenomenon internationally, fuelled by the growth of the entertainment industry and the increase in international travel.

Unique to film and television is the cross-section of skilled labour that is required. A variety of workers – from electricians to welders, demolition specialists to carpenters, logisticians to hoteliers – may be required to meet the needs of any given production.

> "A film industry enables individual and collective pride and self-esteem far and above the mere work that it creates. The industry is one of the most powerful sociological tools for a society to preserve, protect and enhance its unique culture. Creative industries enhance life in any community. Creative voices in media creation will draw more people here to vacation, to work and to live than any hyped up advertising campaign."
>
> - NWT filmmaker and survey respondent

SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS

There are more than 40 Aboriginal groups and organizations in the NWT who join with government groups, industry organizations and southern producers as film industry stakeholders.

The NWT film industry has equally important social and cultural impacts on northern communities, especially in the area of youth engagement, language and cultural retention and identity formation. Multimedia production skills workshops have been integrated with mental health programs and can serve to retain and promote Aboriginal languages and traditional knowledge.

In addition to being an important form of storytelling and artistic expression, film is an area in which success can build local pride – as evidenced by the recent participation of NWT filmmakers at film festivals such as Hot Docs and Cannes.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The spending profiles of guest and local producers differ, but each play important roles. Local film makers spend a larger share of their budgets in the local (NWT) economy in wages and compensation, principally for technical crew and talent, both behind and in front of the camera.

Established film production companies from outside the territory undertaking location production in the NWT make significant expenditures in the local economy, but primarily in accommodation, food, travel, transportation and logistics. They also bring new investment to the territory and can build the credits and experience of local crew.

The overall fiscal impact of film and media arts is positive. In 2013, the incremental amount of territorial tax revenue generated by economic spin-offs from production activity was more than 2.5 times the GNWT's spending on the industry.

Key statistical figures for the NWT Media Production Sector

Description	Total (2013)
GDP impact (direct + spin-off)	$9.7M
Employment impact (direct + spin-off)	106 FTEs
Tax revenue (territorial)	$813K
Territorial support contribution to industry organizations and productions (2012/13)	$310K

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Given the notable role that the film and media industry plays in northern communities, from a cultural and an economic perspective, other circumpolar locations have taken steps to bolster production activity through local TV series and seasonal outdoor location shoots (i.e., guest productions).

The NWT competes with 13 jurisdictions for northern location production. Seven northern regions within Canada can provide somewhat similar locations. Nunavut and the Yukon are particularly similar, although each territory has distinct attributes and features. There are parts of northern Manitoba, Quebec, Alberta, Newfoundland-Labrador and Ontario that can provide similar shooting locations with a variety of incentive programs.

Six circumpolar regions outside of Canada, namely Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Russia, Alaska and Norway, are also considered to offer northern film locations.

The level of guest production in a location is driven by a variety of factors: the visual and exotic appeal of locations, the ease of access to remote locations, the "local knowledge" of pilots and outfitters in dealing with complex logistical and other issues, and the relative cost of production compared to other circumpolar locations. Without incentives to attract guest producers, guest productions are drawn to other, more affordable jurisdictions. The NWT lags behind peer jurisdictions in terms of the amount of its film funding outlay.

Emerging filmmakers making non-commercial projects are currently well supported in the NWT, but there is less funding for more established filmmakers. Levels of SEED and ECE funding, along with Western Arctic Moving Pictures (WAMP)'s targeted "4 Seasons" programs, allow emerging filmmakers to make creative, independent works.

Available export market development funding is roughly on par with the other territories, as is production funding for first productions and small-budget shorts. However, compared to neighbouring territories and provinces, the NWT provides less funding per project for development and less equity investment for production.

There is no post-secondary institution in the NWT offering film education. Compared to peer jurisdictions, limited training and professional development opportunities exist beyond those for entry-level skills and for emerging filmmakers.

Meanwhile, the NWT's support organizations have less capacity than those of its peers, limiting its ability to service local needs.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT):

The NWT's beautiful, diverse and unique geography is second only to its rich northern and Aboriginal culture and heritage. Together they represent the Territory's foremost selling points for attracting guest producers and productions. There is a growing national and international appetite for the unique stories and characters that can be found in the North.

"The Northwest Territories is an inspirational environment for documentary making. Rich in history and compelling human stories, it is also exceptionally beautiful and blessed with a magic hour that runs and runs."

- Max Shapira, Blast! Films, UK

Director Marc Winkler on the set of Tundra Cowboy filmed in the Inuvik Delta Region. Photo credit: Marc Winkler

Summary of the NWT film sector strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

SWOT	Description
Strengths	Beautiful, diverse and unique geography makes for great locations
	Rich, northern and aboriginal culture and heritage contributes to unique stories and people
	The territory developed strengths in reality TV and documentary
	Small, but skilled, pool of film professionals and people
	Well-established Yellowknife International Film Festival to showcase work
	Growing presence of the NWT Film Commission
	Tourism synergies are recognized by NWT Tourism
Weaknesses	High production and transportation costs
	Lack of location production incentives and financial support for established resident producers
	Ability to access national grants and federal funding sources
	Number of experienced crew, talent and support services for medium to large production, especially for scripted content (e.g. drama series, features)
	Limited professional development opportunities
	No post-secondary film education
	Limited professional equipment of broadcast quality available for rent
	Limited production and professional services support
	Industry association lacks funding and has no permanent staff
	Limited access to broadcasters, decision makers and co-production partners
Opportunities	Greater distribution of existing works by NWT filmmakers
	Gaining greater access to decision-makers and CMF funding specifically for northern producers
	Co-productions between NWT filmmakers and guest producers
	Becoming a hub for pan-territorial partnerships
	Identifying and building existing NWT talent
	Opening up new unique locations and marketing key assets
	Furthering partnerships between government and industry stakeholders
	Developing service provision companies
	Several NWT-set stories are in development
Threats	Lack of qualified people and companies, further producer and talent drain
	Low-levels of production of NWT-set stories and returning guest producers
	Production financing gaps and small distribution market size
	Perceptions of guest production by residents
	Perceptions of local labour and infrastructure by guest producers
	Threats facing the greater broadcast industry, downturn in one-off documentaries

STRATEGIC VISION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The direction and oversight for achieving the actions set out in this strategy are guided by the following vision statement, goals and objectives:

VISION:

To encourage and attract productions to all regions of the Northwest Territories that will contribute to employment creation, enhance territorial profile and increase the local industries' creative and technical skills bases.

GOALS:

Although influenced by lessons learned in other jurisdictions, the strategic development of initiatives to grow and develop the sector must remain unique to the NWT and relevant to the specific opportunities and challenges it faces.

Two broad goals are proposed to increase production volume over the next five years:

- Increase the number and quality of local independent film and television production with market interest; and
- Increase the number of guest productions that engage NWT residents and their services.

OBJECTIVES:

There are many opportunities to develop support mechanisms and other self-generated growth strategies that will position the NWT's film sector to grow. Recommendations to achieve the GNWT's vision for the film industry are presented according to the following five objectives:

1) **Strengthen government/industry roles and partnerships:** Actions to be taken to support and grow not only individual organizations, but also the industry as a whole.

2) **Enhance funding and financial support:** Actions to be taken to improve the business environment for local and guest producers; and the ability of production companies to access financing.

3) **Further develop the skills and competencies of NWT film producers and provide a comprehensive suite of above-the-line training opportunities:** Actions to be taken to support and develop local NWT producers and the quality of creative products made.

4) **Assist in building infrastructure, below-the-line crew and support services:** Actions to be taken to improve the equipment, the below-the-line labour force, the support service providers and the facilities available in the NWT for both local and guest producers.

5) **Develop efficient and effective marketing and communications:** Actions to be taken to promote the NWT film sector, which involve both marketing NWT producers within and outside the territory (i.e., outbound marketing) and marketing the territory to other jurisdictions to guest producers (i.e., inbound marketing).

ACTION PLAN

A series of recommended actions are outlined within each of the five objectives. The timely completion and implementation of these recommendations will allow the GNWT to achieve its strategic vision over the next five years. Each action includes:

- Priority rating: A graduated three-level rating is provided with 3 stars (***) representing the highest priority items.
- Potential Activities: The specific activities the objective demands, including both industry-facing and internal actions.
- Rationale: The background behind the recommendation and its relationship (if any) to actions in support of media production seen in other jurisdictions.
- Expected outcomes: The results that such objectives and actions would create.
- Implementation: Suggested timelines with lead and support partners identified mindful of who can practically implement the action and when (as well as other related strategic issues).

OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen government/industry roles and partnerships

Within the NWT, there exists the NWT Film Commission (FC), the NWT Professional Media Association (NWTPMA), Western Arctic Moving Pictures (WAMP), the Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) and Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), the NWT Arts Council (NWTAC), NWT Tourism (NWTT), the NWT Chamber of Commerce (NWTCC), the City of Yellowknife and other municipalities, regional governments, Aboriginal corporations, communications societies, and production companies such as the Northern Communications Society (NCS) and the Inuvialuit Communications Society (ICS).

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
1.1 Officially recognize the film sector as an important economic sector				
*	Recognize the film sector as a growth area for economic and social development; starting with the SEED Policy Sector Support program.	Prioritizing the film and television industry increases profile and allows industry to access GNWT funds to leverage other sources of funds and complete larger projects.	Industry can access greater funding programs, initiatives and opportunities.	Year 1 Lead: ITI Support: FC
1.2 Improve communication channels and clarify roles and responsibilities of film industry organizations				
*	Define and clarify respective roles and responsibilities in a shared vision document.	There is a noted gap in clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the FC and other film industry organizations. Roles and responsibilities need to be designed in tandem. Similar documents exist in other jurisdictions.	Clarification of roles and responsibilities between FC, NWTPMA, WAMP, ECE, ITI and ICS should improve industry/government and intergovernmental relations and lead to more clearly focused actions as a result of clear responsibilities.	Year 2/3 Lead: FC Supports: ITI, ECE, NWTPMA, WAMP
*	Report and evaluate progress made on NWT Film Strategy objectives and actions on an annual basis.	Need to enable more regular feedback on the evolution of the industry, its opportunities and challenges.	Strategy is adapted based on new developments.	Ongoing Lead: FC Supports: ITI, ECE, NWTPMA, WAMP

OBJECTIVE 1

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
1.3 Further operational activities and capacity of the NWT Film Commission				
**	Work with partner organizations to assess the availability and provision of training opportunities (for all levels). Examine means by which FC can work with partner groups to launch new programming to enhance services for residents; examples include: 1) Producer development programming (targeting experienced producers); and 2) Training and mentorship programming for the industry as a whole.	Identified gaps in technical crew experience and certification. Local NWT producers are requesting the FC provide advice on local and national film funding options and facilitate with funding applications. Peer jurisdictions facilitate both types of professional development opportunities.	More support provided to both local and guest productions. Local producers are better able to navigate national funding opportunities. Local industry grows in size and skill level.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: ECE, NWTPMA, WAMP
*	FC facilitates contact and encourages co-operation between local industry and guest productions; working to ensure incoming productions maximize use of NWT skills, facilities and talent.	Concerted effort is needed to encourage local participation in all aspects of guest production.	Maximize NWT employment opportunities resulting from guest production. FC and industry work together as allies to build industry.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: ECE, NWTPMA, WAMP
*	FC works with NWTPMA to identify, develop and market film-friendly logistics and support services.	Guest producers have identified gap in ability to find willing support services. Current logistics providers need training on benefits of film business.	Improved access to and availability of relevant service and support providers.	Year 1 Lead: FC Supports: ECE, NWTPMA
*	FC promotes the registration of both local and guest productions.	Need for a system to comprehensively monitor and record the impact of the film industry.	Improved tracking of sector activity and its impacts.	Year 1 Lead: FC Supports: ITI
1.4 Develop the capacity and role of the NWTPMA				
***	Examine means by which resources can be provided to the NWTPMA.	Strong industry representation is required for the strategy. NWTPMA is volunteer-run and has little capacity to undertake activities beyond advocacy.	NWTPMA helps guide the development of the sector and provides a forum for regular communication with sector participants.	Year 1 Lead: NWTPMA Supports: FC and ITI
**	Provide support to the NWTPMA to allow for the organization to provide member support and organization activities.	To address noted lack of ways to share and collaborate within the territory, and a need for a forum to connect industry, especially the regions.	NWTPMA increases membership and assists in seeking employment opportunities for members. Requests made to FC for industry contacts are referred to the association.	Year 2 Lead: NWTPMA Support: FC

OBJECTIVE 1

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
*	Assess the potential for the NWTPMA (or the NWTPMA in partnership with WAMP or NCS) to maintain an equipment rental system for grip and professional equipment as a revenue stream (action item 1.5 below).	This could create a means of generating income for NWTPMA/WAMP and facilitate discussions with guest producers requiring grip equipment.	NWTPMA has a stake in developing and improving film infrastructure.	Year 3 Lead: NWTPMA Supports: WAMP, NCS
1.5 Augment delivery of more advanced creative and technical training and distribution through WAMP				
*	Borrow/buy higher-end camera (RED) and associated equipment and develop more advanced training in dramatic production. Cost is a consideration.	Support emerging and established filmmakers in the creative production of film.	With instruction in directing and shooting fiction productions, the remaining technical crew in the NWT falls into place.	Year 2 Lead: WAMP Supports: ECE, national arts organizations, partnerships with Film and Video Arts Society Alberta
**	WAMP furthers partnerships with ECE, FC and industry to advance distribution of NWT films in communities and schools across the territory.	Supporting programming like WAMP's *On the Road Program* will develop distribution channels across the NWT and connect with communities.	Increased interest within communities of film career opportunities, and territorial pride.	Years 1 and 2 Lead: WAMP Supports: ECE, NWTPMA
*	Assist WAMP and Yellowknife International Film Festival (YIFF) to increase profile outside the NWT.	Need to further the profile of existing films outside the territory.	Increase in profile of NWT filmmakers.	Year 1 (ongoing) Lead: WAMP Supports: FC, NWTPMA
1.6 Streamline service delivery and introduce efficiencies				
***	Educate Economic Development Officers (EDOs) about the film industry.	Provide support to EDO's (through training) so as to maximize EDO's ability to deliver FC and ITI programs as well as provide advice on training opportunities, film development, production and distribution.	Those administering funding better understand unique film business models and are able to follow filmmakers through the SEED funding cycle.	Year 1 Lead: ITI Supports: FC, NWTPMA
***	Create awareness for NWT students enrolled in film-sector related training by creating a "Emerging Industry" category under the NWT Film Suppliers Guide.	Provide students with the opportunity to return to the NWT to further their careers and have access to funding.	Local and outside productions are able to access returning students who have expertise and/or credentials working in film.	Year 1 Lead: FC Support: ECE, NWTPMA
**	Track the total budgets of productions who are receiving public funding.	Data currently not tracked. Volume of supported production is an important metric used in other jurisdictions.	GNWT and industry are better able to track and recognize impact of public support.	Year 1 Leads: ECE and ITI Support: FC

OBJECTIVE 1

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
*	Work with ECE to develop new ways of collaborating around education and training schemes for the professional development of the sector. Consider internship programs.	Need to provide industry-driven training targeting missing skills (business affairs, proposal writing, marketing, screenwriting, camera operation, etc.).	A coordinated approach effectively utilizes resources between ministries and responds to the variety of training needs across the sector. Professional development gaps in the NWT are addressed.	Year 1 Leads: FC and ECE Supports: NWTPMA, WAMP
1.7 Recognize film tourism effects and leverage film opportunities through NWTT initiatives				
*	Encourage tourism promotion officials to identify opportunities to use film locations as part of the attraction for tourists.	Other jurisdictions take advantage of spin-off impacts of tourism (i.e., how many tourism dollars come in as a result of production).	Develop a more holistic portrait of the economic impact assessment of sector.	As opportunities arise. Lead: NWTT Support: FC
**	Encourage greater dialogue and collaboration among film commissioners, city economic development offices, film and television producers, and talent agents.	Film tourism depends on five factors: destination marketing activities, destination attributes, film-specific factors, film commission and government efforts, and location feasibility.	Government and industry have better understanding of mutual needs and objectives. Improved service to location shoots for local and guest producers.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: NWTT
*	Encourage NWTT to promote film in their marketing activities both before and after the release of media product, and leverage partnership to support productions coming in at the pre-development stage. This includes "FAM" tours, discussed later.	Being involved at the outset of film production is regarded as being crucial for destinations, as it allows for the ability to recognize promotional opportunities and act in anticipation of demand.	NWTT is proactive in promoting locations to film producers at the pre-development stage.	Year 1 Lead: NWTT Support: FC
*	Plan marketing activities to coincide with successful commercial productions.	NWTT successfully launched their, "My Spectacular" campaign during the first season of Arctic Air by purchasing CBC ads to coincide as the show aired.	Generated tourism to the NWT.	As opportunities arise. Lead: NWTT Support: FC

OBJECTIVE 1

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
1.8 Develop and promote existing film businesses				
**	Encourage the growth of film businesses by offering support and programing.	Need for more professional production companies and service providers.	Establishment of strong film businesses across the territory, capable of providing services to guest productions .	Year 2 (depending on project funding) Leads: ITI, NWTPMA, NCS, ICS Supports: FC, BDIC
1.9 Develop programming in the NWT for instruction in film and media arts production				
*	With stakeholders, explore opportunities for programming in film and media arts production.	There are no institutional training options.	Youth can pursue film education within the territory.	Year 4 Lead: ECE, Support: FC, ITI, WAMP
1.10 Develop partnerships				
**	Engage and exchange knowledge with other northern film commissions in the Yukon and Nunavut, as well as funders such the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor).	More opportunities for joint marketing and/or training initiatives for northern filmmakers.	Increased access to various approaches, which allows for the identification of best practices in terms of funding schemes and support models, etc.	Ongoing Lead: FC Supports: Northern film commissioners, CanNor
*	Explore opportunities and strategic partnerships; especially between NWTPMA and peer organizations in Nunavut and the Yukon.	Producers can develop co-productions, leveraging funding in other jurisdictions.	Greater interaction among northern filmmakers leads to co-production opportunities.	Ongoing Lead: NWTPMA Support: FC
**	Explore partnerships with other jurisdictions in order to share resources and collaborate on attracting guest productions.	The Yukon Film Commission developed close ties with the British Columbia film industry and there has been some effort to capitalize on spillover business.	More advanced training and equipment options.	Ongoing Lead: FC Support: NWTPMA
*	Fostering formal relationships between NWTPMA and the Alberta Media Production Industries Association.	NWT could draw on the relationship to hear about potential workshop ideas and other professional development opportunities, such as seminars, workshops and other programming and events.	Leveraging existing programs saves need to develop programming from scratch	Year 3 Lead: NWTPMA Support: FC

OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance funding and financial support

Strengthening resident film businesses and attracting guest production are considered to be mutually reinforcing activities.

The introduction of rebates will make the NWT a more attractive industry location for productions coming from outside the territory and respond to the need for professional development of local talent while contributing indirectly to other sectors of the economy. Training and local labour incentives that encourage local participation will help to address the reported disconnect between local industry members and visiting productions.

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
2.1 Implement a production incentive rebate.				
***	The NWT Film Commission implements a Film Rebate Pilot Program. Program categories should include financial rebates for the purchase of goods and services, travel to and within the NWT and wages for the training and hire of local residents, particularly in recognized film industry positions and include an incentive for productions filming outside of Yellowknife.	All peer jurisdictions offer rebates to decrease the cost of shooting and increase the hiring of resident labour. Financial incentives have been proven to boost film industries in jurisdictions globally.	Co-productions with Northern producers are more enticing and the NWT is a more attractive location for guest production, particularity in the regions, which leads to an increase in production volume and the ability to track NWT spend.	Year 1 Lead: FC
**	Following pilot year, convene industry stakeholders to present feedback on parameters and success, and develop suggestions for a more permanent system.	To adjust rebate percentage, decision-making processes and eligibility based on available funds and industry needs.	A permanent, fine-tuned rebate program unique to the NWT film sector.	Years 2 and 3 Lead: FC Support: ITI
2.2 Develop film industry–specific access to bridge financing in the NWT				
*	Explore options with other agencies to provide bridge financing to NWT producers who have qualified for rebates.	Many producers need up-front production financing before going into production, especially in a rebate funding system.	Local producers have better cash flow.	Year 1 Lead: FC Support: ITI

OBJECTIVE 2

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
2.3 Pursue a partnership with Northwestel to increase the value of broadcast licenses for NWT producers				
*	Pursue partnership opportunities with Northwestel Community TV.	Changes to the Canadian Media Fund (CMF) broadcast guidelines have opened up new funding avenues for Northern producers.	Enable producers to complete budgets, and access CMF funding through a broadcast trigger.	Year 2 Leads: FC, ITI
2.4 Enhance access to the Support to Entrepreneur and Economic Development (SEED) Program				
*	Consider increasing SEED funding program caps.	Yukon, Alberta and Nunavut all have higher limits for funding for resident filmmakers, both for project development and production.	Mid-career film professionals are able to create higher-quality works appropriate to their stage of development.	Year 2 (based on budgetary capacity) Lead: ITI Support: FC

Filming on location on the Dempster Highway.
Photo credit: Kirsta Cartnew

OBJECTIVE 3

Further develop the skills and competencies of NWT film producers

Producers play a vital role in the economy as they help translate the visions of writers into viable projects, partner with outside companies for additional budgets, provide employment for local crews and bring outside investment and revenue into the territory. There is a real need to build the business skills and the capacity of local producers and companies so that they can enter into co-productions, attend national and international markets, and have their work distributed within the territory, nationally and internationally. Working with more experienced producers will help develop producer skills in the NWT.

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
3.1 Identify and build a database of industry participants				
**	Develop an inventory of producers, directors, actors and writers involved in past and future broadcast projects or films that screened or will screen at top festivals, who are or have been resident in the NWT.	NWT filmmakers have seen some success at festivals (i.e. Cannes, Hot Docs screenings) and identifying and nurturing local talent is a film commission best practice.	Grow the industry profile internally in the NWT and externally to guest producers. FC is better able to respond to requests for referrals.	Year 1 Leads: FC Supports: WAMP, NWTPMA, ECE
3.2 Development of training and mentorship programming				
**	Work with industry to identify the training needs of emerging and experienced talent.	Training and mentorship programming is vitally important to growing the sector. A small industry needs a customized approach and the needs of emerging and established producers differ.	Emerging and established producers are able to access programming suitable to their skill levels. Mentorship programs encourage long-term relationships and allow emerging filmmakers to bypass the production assistant (PA) level, and experienced producers.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: ECE, NWTPMA

OBJECTIVE 3

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
3.3 Develop advanced producer programming (i.e., export market development program)				
***	Work with stakeholders to introduce more professional development and producing workshops during the Yellowknife International Film festival and other related industry events. Invite: Funders like CMF, Bell Media and Telefilm to provide training in grant writing; and Industry experts to provide pitch training and business affairs training.	Producers are asking for expertise in budget structuring, grant writing and project bookkeeping. There is a need to teach production companies how to plan and develop commercial projects and complete high-quality applications to be delivered to broadcasters and funders.	Expand knowledge of financing options, build relationships with national funding bodies and successfully apply to larger funds.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: ECE, NWTPMA
**	Explore partnerships with event organizations (like Hot Docs) to build a targeted producer mentorship leading up to and running during the targeted festival, or develop one internally (e.g., the Yukon provides a Banff Mentorship Program).	Gaps exist in knowledge about how to develop for national and international markets.	Producers are more aware of issues and how to work and negotiate with broadcasters.	Year 2 (requires producers of the program to have market-ready projects. Lead: FC Supports: ECE, NWTPMA
**	Support Northern filmmakers' ability to attend international forums, trade shows and markets, particularly Hot Docs and Banff World Media.	Attending events is important for commercializing projects. Normally, broadcasters need to meet a producer multiple times before taking him or her seriously, and repeat visits are necessary.	Filmmakers get out to national and international markets, conferences and festivals, gain understanding of what buyers want and how to position themselves and their products, and build connections and networks in international markets.	Year 2 (requires producers of the program to have market-ready projects and Producer Development Program mentors) Lead: FC
**	Explore the development of master classes or practice-pitch sessions for local industry in conjunction with guest producer visits.	Local industry needs greater networking and experience within the larger Canadian film sector.	Relationships between local and guest producers are fostered.	Early in Year 2 Lead: FC Support: ECE, NWTPMA

OBJECTIVE 3

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
3.4 Assist with access to specialized film professional service firms				
*	Develop a resource document of entertainment lawyers, production accountants and insurance and rights clearance companies in the NWT and other jurisdictions who can assist northerners. Examine opportunity to develop this with Nunavut Film and/or Yukon Film and Sound Commission.	No specialized film professional services exist in the territory, but producers have questions on rights issues, negotiations and production deductions.	Local producers are more effective with access to a production accountant.	Year 2 Lead: FC

CJ Eggenberger working on the set of *Arctic Air*, filming on location in Yellowknife, NT.
Photo credit: Aaron Haesler

OBJECTIVE 4

Assist in building infrastructure, below-the-line crew and support services

Film infrastructure includes the below-the-line labour force as well as equipment and support services. Initially the most crucial investment is to build human resources by creating more opportunities to work on set and enabling industry-standard accreditation.

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
4.1 Identify and train available and potential local crew				
**	Work with stakeholders to conduct a detailed skills inventory and confirm what key remaining production roles are still in demand.	Training will need to be targeted to roles that are most in demand.	Key new skills are developed, reducing the number of crew members brought in for larger productions.	Year 2 Lead: FC Support: ECE, NWTPMA
***	Enhance the NWT Film Suppliers Guide by identifying providers of catering, craft service, transportation, construction, make-up and hair, props, electrician and logistics companies with experience or interest in film work. Expand to include a database of industry professionals, that includes resumes and screen credits with assistance from the NWTPMA.	Both local and foreign productions are able to find the skilled workers necessary for the artistic, technical and logistical sides of productions.	Facilitate contact and encourage co-operation between local industry and guest productions; work to ensure incoming productions maximize use of NWT skills, facilities and talent.	Ongoing Lead: FC Support: NWTPMA
4.2 Encourage support service companies to recognize and capitalize on business opportunities in film production				
*	Educate companies on the value of working for film productions and on how to develop their skills in service provision on film sets.	There is an opportunity for existing businesses to better tailor their support services for film.	Services are provided at industry-standard levels and locals develop more trust in guest productions.	Year 2 Lead: FC Support: ITI
4.3 Access critical equipment and infrastructure needs as the industry develops				
*	Conduct an infrastructure needs assessment of outstanding facilities and equipment needs (e.g., washroom trailers, generators, production office spaces for guest productions, grip trucks).	Certain large productions need to be able to shoot remotely with large crews.	Infrastructure needs of productions are better serviced. Infrastructure grows at a base that corresponds with need.	Year 2 or 3 (FC consults location managers and on NWT experience for needs assessment)

OBJECTIVE 5

Developing efficient and effective marketing and communications

Marketing encompasses the film commission's efforts to attract guest production and includes a combination of efforts: attending trade events, providing familiarization (FAM) tours and production and location packages to location managers and producers, and promoting incentive programs.

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
5.1 Participate and represent the NWT in national and international industry events as a film commission				
***	Attend Tier 1 events such as the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), Banff and Primetime, to develop relationships with national funders and other provincial funders at the Association of Provincial Funding Agencies (APFA) meetings.	Face-to-face meetings are the basis of business dealings. The Yukon and Nunavut attend these Tier 1 events. Meetings at Primetime are good in terms of networking with Canadian government agencies and getting on their radar. The cost of attending is minimal compared to the value of networking with other commissions and decision makers	Begin building relationships within Canada. Presence builds the NWT's visibility and reputation. The NWT is perceived as a player in a competitive industry.	Starting in Year 1 Lead: FC (depending on budget, Primetime is top, followed by Banff, then TIFF) Support: NWTMPA
5.1 Participate and represent the NWT in national and international industry events as a film commission				
**	Attend Tier 2 and international events (such as the Whistler Film Forum and Reelscreen Washington).	Attend events to touch base with participants in FAM tours. Attending Tier 2 events depends on strategic objectives. Whistler is a smaller Canadian industry event that provides a good, informal environment in which to further relationships. Reelscreen in Washington allows for large-scale networking with unscripted producers.	A broader awareness of the location offered in the NWT and its incentive programs attracts increased productions.	Year 3 onward (once marketing materials are developed and program cap raised) Lead: FC
*	Attend locations forums, particularly the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) annual Locations Show.	When the Film Rebate Program becomes more established and marketing materials develop, territorial representation to promote will be vital.	Increase in number of producers interested in shooting in the NWT.	Year 1 onward Lead: FC

OBJECTIVE 5

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
5.2 Invest in producing a series of short videos to showcase the varied landscape, which also encourages training and mentorship				
***	Invest in the making of a short film or a series of web shorts that brings in professional mentors, including a showrunner to break the story and to develop a writing room with NWT writers, a director trainer to train directors on roles, and cinematographers. Identify needed equipment.	Address need for training and need to showcase NWT potential and content with visual material. The $500k+ *Yukonic* web series garnered significant play online and is recognized as a good marketing tool, as well as an important opportunity for training in a professional context. The piece received funding from CanNor, showcased all the regions of the territory and brought together veteran directors and professionals from Vancouver and Calgary and young residents in a mentoring relationship. Developing the series of 10 shorts also led to a limited commercial equipment package.	Development of web media that showcases visual assets as well as local talent. Demonstrates local willingness to work and creates a tangible product for promotional efforts on the website and at tradeshows such as the LA Locations forum. Local talent learns and follows industry on-set standards in a real-world application.	Year 3 Lead: FC Supports: NWTPMA, national funders, ITI
5.3 Develop familiarization ("FAM") tours for guest producers with NWTT				
***	Offer familiarization tours to external production companies to show different localities and target certain communities of interest. Plan in conjunction with an annual NWT film and television job fair or industry forum.	Inviting producers from key markets to see the best of what the region has to offer is an activity that has had positive results in other circumpolar regions. Targeting filmmakers is especially important at the pre-production stage. March is considered a good time in the Yukon (due to its perfect snow and light, and less busy hotels), while August is typical for Nunavut.	Heightened appreciation of the range of location options outside of Yellowknife and the availability of local talent and skilled labour.	Early in Year 2 Lead: NWTT Supports: FC, NWTPMA

OBJECTIVE 5

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
5.4 Augment online marketing materials and activities				
***	Develop promotional videos with industry to promote filming and locations in the NWT. Consider offering spend rebate to companies in exchange for behind-the-scenes footage showcasing regions.	The incompletion of the website for the NWT's film industry was noted. An improved, interactive platform would host video content and promote the range of NWT talent and infrastructure. The marketing campaign would also focus on previous documentaries, reality TV, and commercials made in the NWT.	Huge asset to the overall sector's promotional reach. More commercials are made as a result.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: Local service providers, NWTPMA
*	Ongoing development of the FC website, particularly the location library section.	While the information provided online by the FC is fairly comprehensive, participants indicated the need for additional information in terms of online libraries of locations (presumably villages and towns as opposed to the natural landscapes that are well identified), equipment (including its availability for rent) and skilled professionals (including their availability).	Enhanced user experience of online film assets.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: Local service providers, NWTPMA
5.5 Explore partnerships and national and international resources to develop marketing materials				
*	Partner with NWTT and guest productions on a co-venture to gather aerial footage from across the region.	The two sides could share costs and benefit from each other's strengths in access and expertise.	Viewers of broadcast shows experience the best of the NWT tourism assets.	As opportunities arise Lead: NWT Tourism Support: FC
*	Partner with NWTT and guest productions during broadcast of NWT-shot films to develop marketing for tourism.	Leverage cross-promotion of shared interests.	Increased efficiency in use of resources.	As opportunities arise Lead: NWT Tourism Support: FC
*	Explore the joint marketing initiatives of the APFA and Telefilm, as well as the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI)'s marketing solutions.	Find cost-effective and tested options.	Greater reach of marketing campaigns.	As opportunities arise Lead: FC Support: AFCI, Telefilm, APFA

OBJECTIVE 5

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
5.6 Assist local NWT filmmakers in attending key markets				
**	Explore the possibility for producers to attend Hot Docs or other events showcasing works by NWT filmmakers such as: ImagiNATIVE, Vancouver or Whistler Film Festival, Banff Media Festival, Strategic Partners or Reelscreen.	This was seen as important for the growth of the industry and forms part of the Producer Development Program. The FC needs to be marketing local industry more effectively.	NWT producers and filmmakers explore new markets, develop co-production partnerships and showcase their work nationally and internationally.	Depends on "export readiness" of producers and participation in Producer Development Program Lead: FC Support: NWTPMA
*	Examine opportunities to partner with other northern film commissions/ development corporations at an industry market event to assist in maximizing the industry event experience.	This has occurred in Atlantic provinces. It saves on costs and filmmakers typically share similar needs and types of stories. Costs are always an issue; this will reduce some of that strain.	FC and/or NWT filmmakers maximize the value of their event attendance (or even to maximize attendance at their part of the event) at a lower cost.	Year 2 or 3 Lead: FC Support: NWTPMA
5.7 Promote the distribution and recognition of NWT filmmakers and their works				
***	Add film components to events marketing the NWT (such as film screenings at the 2010 Winter Olympics and NWT Days in Ottawa).	This will add value to these events.	National and international audiences are exposed to NWT films.	As opportunities arise Lead: FC Supports: ITI, ECE
*	Explore alternative means to market and distribute films made by NWT filmmakers, including organizing community viewing tours, integrating films into educational curriculum, exhibiting films during conventions in the territory.	Local industry feels there is no support system to get theatrical distribution or broadcast licenses.	Greater access to NWT films within the territory.	Years 2 or 3 Lead: ECE Support: WAMP, FC
5.8 Augment internal communications processes within the NWT				
*	Develop a community outreach program that includes the exchange of knowledge around funding, regular screenings of films shot in the NWT, the initiation of research and development, and tailored engagement with First Nations communities.	Identified need to work with regional offices to strengthen delivery and ensure that they cater to the film industry business model. The need for improved outreach into communities and assistance recruiting new applicants.	Greater representation from regions outside Yellowknife in the film sector.	Year 3 Lead: ITI regional offices Supports: FC, ECE

OBJECTIVE 5

	Potential activities	Rationale	Expected outcomes	Implementation
•	Develop an effective outreach campaign around available funding opportunities for the NWT's film and television sector, involving online and print materials as well as community-targeted information sessions.	Respondents and interviewees pointed to a lack of access to information, a perception of ineligibility and unsuitability, and a hesitancy to apply for funding.	Applications for funding schemes increase; the negative perception of eligibility requirements in the industry lessens.	Year 2 Lead: FC Supports: ITI regional offices, ECE

A packed house at the 2014 Yellowknife International Film Festival.
Photo credit: Western Arctic Moving Pictures

IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASUREMENT

A staggered roll out will be incorporated to allow for reasonable lead time to obtain resources and build partnerships to implement actions.

Highest priority items (***) are directly applicable to current and/or future initiatives and must be completed in order to implement other activities and/or are considered to be an immediate need to be met first. Medium priority items (**) are identified as a relatively important action to be taken and the lowest priority (*) are those rarely identified as an immediate need and offering little or no threat to the industry.

In Year 1, implementing the Film Rebate Pilot Program is the most immediate priority. This multiple-rebate offer is relevant to the NWT as it speaks to the core of the GNWT's education, employment, tourism and cultural mandates. This initiative will assist both local and guest productions and has the potential to improve employment, skills and spending in the local economy.

As this is a pilot program, it is critical to gauge accurately the impact the program has on the sector in the NWT. To this end, we will monitor and track the program impacts such as the use of local labour and other key metrics. Indeed, competitive incentives can attract more guest producers to the NWT, but ensuring local participation on these sets is what will allow those in the local industry to build their skills, which will ultimately increase the competitiveness of the NWT as a location and its sustainability as a sector.

The third and fourth themes, enhancing talent and enhancing training support schemes, encompass two high-priority activities that will be done early to carry out future actions. The skills inventory of both past and present NWT resident talent should be done early in Year 1 so that future planning can take place around these results and partnerships should be developed early with ECE for education initiatives.

Available funding will be vital in Years 1 and 2 in order to execute many of the action items (e.g., website enhancement, promotional materials and films, etc.).

The success of the NWT Film Strategy, as a whole, will be determined according to macro-indicators based on a range of quantitative and qualitative goals, and be measured after a five-year period.

In the first year, establishing baselines for these performance metrics will allow the NWT to measure sector growth.

Measures of strategy success over a five year period

Measure	Description
Quantitative measures	Number and size of local productions with broadcast or distributor support, and leading to greater outside investment in and revenue coming to the NWT.
	Number of exhibitions and awards for NWT films at festivals, leading to a rise in the recognition of the NWT film sector nationally and internationally.
	Number of productions in the NWT and the percentage spend of overall budget in the NWT, broken out by large, external, small and/or local projects.
	Ratio of hiring local talent on a given production vs. those brought in from other jurisdictions.
	Number of applications to SEED funding grants and the rebate program, as well as differentiation in grant recipient productions (e.g., size, genre).
	Number of companies applying for the rebates.
	Rise in access and usage analytics of the FC's website.
	Number of productions shooting in locations outside of Yellowknife.
	Number of new NWTPMA members.
Qualitative measures	Awareness and support among NWT politicians, related associations and the private sector with regard to the film industry.
	Qualitative feedback from applicants, recipients and industry members (e.g., NWTPMA) as to how they feel about the support to the film industry.
	Qualitative feedback from internship hosts, workshop trainers, participants, etc.
	Production companies that have grown into established businesses help to professionalize the industry.
	Partnerships or co-productions with external producers, lead to a greater competitive position.

ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

1. Strengthen government/industry roles and partnerships

1.1. Officially recognize the film sector as an important economic sector.
1.2. Improve communication channels and clarify roles and responsibilities of film industry organizations.
1.3. Further operational activities and capacity of the NWT Film Commission.
1.4. Develop the capacity and role of the NWTPMA.
1.5. Augment delivery of more advanced creative and technical training and distribution through WAMP.
1.6. Streamline service delivery and introduce efficiencies.
1.7. Recognize film tourism effects and leverage film opportunities through NWTT initiatives.
1.8. Develop and promote existing film businesses.
1.9. Develop formalized programming in the NWT for instruction in film and media arts production.
1.10. Develop partnerships.

2. Enhance funding and financial support

2.1. Implement a production incentive rebate.
2.2. Develop film industry-specific access to bridge financing in the NWT.
2.3. Pursue a partnership with Northwestel to increase the value of broadcast licenses for NWT producers.
2.4. Enhance access to the Support for Entrepreneur and Economic Development (SEED) program.

3. Create training opportunities

3.1. Identify and build a database of industry participants.
3.2. Development of training and mentorship programming.
3.3. Develop advanced producer programming (i.e., export market development program).
3.4. Assist with access to specialized film professional service firms.

4. Invest in building infrastructure, below-the-line crews and support services

4.1. Identify and train available and potential local crew.
4.2. Encourage support service companies to recognize and capitalize on business opportunities in film production.
4.3. Access to critical equipment and infrastructure needs as the industry develops.

5. Develop efficient and effective marketing and communications

5.1. Participate and represent the NWT in national and international industry events as a film commission.

5.2. Invest in producing a series of short videos to showcase the varied landscape, which also encourages training and mentorship.

5.3. Develop familiarization ("FAM") tours for guest producers with NWTT.

5.4. Augment online marketing materials and activities.

5.5. Explore partnerships and national and international resources to develop marketing materials.

5.6. Assist local NWT filmmakers in attending key markets.

5.7. Promote the distribution and recognition of NWT filmmakers and their works.

5.8. Augment internal communications processes within the NWT.

Kim Plant - Director, Frantz Benoit
Photo credit: Kristen Murphy Photography

CONCLUSION

Despite its proud 25 year history, the NWT Film Industry is still very much in a stage of early development.

Even in an environment where the beauty and spirit of the North "sells itself," production costs, limited infrastructure and a lack of labour are challenges – most notably for producers considering projects from outside the territory.

There is nonetheless a wealth of talent in the NWT, and opportunities exist to facilitate greater distribution of existing works, identify and build talent and to become a hub for pan-territorial partnerships. Several NWT-set stories are in development by renowned international filmmakers, and guest producers are eager to shoot in the territory, develop co-productions and work with local talent.

Actions and investments are required to enhance the viability of the NWT as a destination for out-of-territory projects. Meanwhile, more on-the-job training in all aspects of production and post-production will also serve to generate growth and build resident workers' skills and screen credits.

Film and television production provides significant economic impacts and social benefits involving traditional knowledge, cultural preservation, youth empowerment, community pride and storytelling from remote regions.

Considering the many social and cultural impacts, as well as the growing local industry and interest from guest producers, there is a clear rationale for directing further public and private support toward the initiatives and actions identified in this Strategy to grow the sector.